

## Leaving *Environmental Health Perspectives* on a High Note

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After 4.5 years serving as Editor-in-Chief of *Environmental Health Perspectives* (EHP), I am heading into retirement with a great sense of satisfaction. Centermost in my mind are the many people who have enriched my professional journey in this role while contributing to EHP's reputation as the foremost journal in the environmental health sciences.

My primary goal as Editor-in-Chief has been to make sure that EHP publishes content that is both *important* and *trustworthy* as well as *interesting* and *useful*. This goal is especially important given that EHP is funded by the U.S. government; thus, I have remained committed to this broad goal with the highest resolve. Although it sounds simple in concept, like many things in life, actualizing this goal is easier said than done. For example, the history of science illustrates, over and over again, that the *importance* of a novel research finding may not be apparent at the start. To judge potential importance of new submissions we depend on assessments made by a board of about 50 associate editors (<https://ehp.niehs.nih.gov/about-ehp/editorial-boards/associate>) and hundreds of reviewers, including those on our Editorial Review Board (<https://ehp.niehs.nih.gov/about-ehp/editorial-boards/review>). They evaluate submissions in light of our current understanding of the questions posed and judge whether the findings extend that understanding, have the potential to become important when verified, and/or are likely to stimulate further research.

*Trustworthiness* is built, sometimes laboriously, over time, yet can all too easily be derailed by an inadvertent misstep. Our job as editors is to ensure that the information we publish is as transparently, thoroughly, and clearly reported as possible and that authors have interpreted their findings with objectivity and insight, not spin or bias. Our reviewers are invaluable in helping us and our authors meet these goals. This past year alone, nearly 700 scientists provided expert reviews for EHP. On behalf of all of us at EHP, thank you all for your generous donation of time and expertise, which is so critical for fair and effective peer review.

Throughout the peer review process, from screening new submissions at the start through confirming that final revisions are complete, I rely on the keen eyes and expertise of our professional science editors, Drs. Jane Schroeder, Windy Boyd, and Kristin Inman (contractor). I continue to learn from this adroit team and have the highest respect for the experience, sound judgment, and commitment they bring to EHP. Their work is essential in supporting EHP's reputation for maintaining the highest standards in peer review and publishing content that is both *important* and *trustworthy*.

Our journal has long held the *interest* of a broad and diverse readership. We see this in the variety of people who access our content, follow us on social media, and sign up for notifications. EHP's author-initiated scholarly research reports and integrative reviews and commentaries are augmented with news articles written for the broader audience of scientists and others who care about environmental health issues. My kudos go to Susan Booker, EHP's news editor, for developing Focus articles and reader-friendly Science Selections with professional science writers on topics that she identifies based on input from our very helpful News Advisory Committee (<https://ehp.niehs.nih.gov/about-ehp/editorial-boards/>

[news](#)). She also creates and manages other EHP features, including our popular podcasts and curated collections on hot and emerging topics. And she finds the intriguing images for our homepage that entice readers to explore our content.

A prerequisite for making new knowledge *useful*, whether to inform regulatory decisions and public health policies or to stimulate the next phase of research, is to make the knowledge discoverable and fully accessible to all readers everywhere via the web. Our operations manager, Shaun Halloran, who joined EHP shortly before I became Editor-in-Chief, and his staff have revolutionized how the journal is produced and accessed on the web. As a result of the up-to-date processes he has enacted, the time from acceptance to final publication is now a week or two, as opposed to the months it took when he started in 2015. Authors can now easily track metrics for their papers once published, too. Shaun's energy and ingenuity are keeping EHP at the forefront of scholarly publishing practice.

Maintaining the high stature of EHP in today's publishing environment, with many new online journals appearing each year, is the job of many. We are challenged continually to set aside time from the day-to-day activities of peer review and production to step back, evaluate our successes, and enact continuous improvements. Our whole team participates in this high-level endeavor, drawing from publication metrics, citation indices, article access data, author input, and social media to determine whether we are meeting the needs of the environmental health research and user community at large. This, of course, includes input from and outreach to the global community through the efforts of Hui Hu, EHP's international outreach manager, and application of innovative marketing approaches managed by our production team. Although we are small in numbers here in the EHP editorial and production offices, we are mighty in output.

Whether you are a new reader or have published with EHP for many years, I encourage you to visit our website (<https://ehp.niehs.nih.gov>) to read more about our scope and the talented staff and editorial boards who make it all happen. In re-reading my introductory editorial published in 2015 (<https://doi.org/10.1289/ehp.1510617>), I am struck by the extent to which my idealist vision at the time has played out. We have evolved with the field, adding content from new and emerging disciplines and balancing that content across topic areas. We have engaged many new investigators as associate editors and reviewers. And we have advanced scholarly publishing practices as articulated here and in a recent editorial about EHP today (<https://doi.org/10.1289/EHP5511>). It is important to add that we could not have done any of this without the steadfast and much appreciated support of NIEHS leadership, specifically Dr. Linda Birnbaum (NIEHS Director through September 2019) and Dr. Rick Woychik (NIEHS Deputy Director and now acting Director) and their dedicated staffs.

Now, as I pass the torch to Dr. Joel Kaufman as EHP's next Editor-in-Chief, it is with great confidence in his talents as a scientist, wisdom as a leader, and enthusiasm as an advocate for the journal. I invite you to welcome him to EHP, read a forthcoming editorial about his vision for the journal going forward, and of course, keep submitting your best work to EHP!